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Saint Lucia's priorities for the development of the blue economy

With almost 160 kilometres of coastline and an exclusive economic zone of more than 15,400 km², coastal and marine resources offer an opportunity for Saint Lucia to sustainably grow its economy while empowering communities and protecting and conserving critical habitats and species.

With financial support from the Food and Agriculture Organization and through the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism's cross-country BE-CLME+ Project, the Government of Saint Lucia is exploring its blue economy potential through cross-sectoral partnerships and identifying opportunities for collaboration, growth and development. By adopting a data-driven approach to participatory marine spatial planning, we're working with partners and communities to bridge the data gap, allowing us to make informed decisions about Saint Lucia's blue economy.

Follow us to learn more about Saint Lucia's blue economy priorities.

Tagline: **Saint Lucia's Blue Economy: Ocean Resources for a Sustainable Future**

First post (with above caption):



**Our Blue Economy Priorities:
Protecting ecosystems through collaboration**



**Saint Lucia's Blue Economy:
Ocean Resources for a Sustainable Future**

Caption: Saint Lucia’s priorities for the development of the blue economy

The marine tourism sector is one of the largest single maritime economic activity in Saint Lucia. From yachting and boating to cruise ships; sportfishing to whale watching; SCUBA diving and snorkelling to sea and sun bathing – Saint Lucia has it all. And we’re looking at expanding: the watersports industry is set to grow and we have to be ready for it. This means proper planning and zoning and investing in the facilities and infrastructure that will ensure that pollution is minimised, safety is ensured and the quality of the marine environment – and the product we’re offering – is maintained.

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We know how important fisheries are to food security, poverty eradication and the development of island nations. In St Lucia the fisheries sector employs thousands of people across our coastal communities, providing much needed income and healthy food choices. Fishing is also ingrained in how we live – it's part of our culture and helps shape and define who we are as an island nation. But our industry and our culture are under threat from unsustainable fishing practices, overexploitation of our nearshore fishing grounds, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. There are ways to overcome this, we have an opportunity to sustainably expand our fishing efforts into our exclusive economic zone and into pelagic and deep-water demersal fisheries and increased use of fish aggregating devices. But this expansion needs to be carefully planned, applying ecosystem-based management plans, collecting and using data to inform management decisions and enforcing regulations – while considering and measuring the impacts on local fishing communities and working with our fisheries stakeholders to build a resilient fisheries industry.

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Marine aquaculture, especially sea moss farming, represents one of Saint Lucia's fastest-growing fisheries. With Saint Lucia's sea moss already being marketed locally and across the world, we're committed to supporting its continued development, focusing on self-sufficiency through effective governance and safeguards, increasing harvest volumes and ensuring community participation and sustainable use. There's also opportunity to venture into other forms of aquaculture, particularly finfish – but this needs to be carefully planned to minimise pollution and the spread of disease to wild species, while also assessing the risk of invasive species, to make sure that our native marine habitats and species are not compromised. But there's so much potential and, with collaborative planning and management, the future looks promising.

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According to the World Bank, developing a blue economy is about sustainably using ocean resources for economic growth and improving livelihoods while restoring and preserving the health of our ocean ecosystems. It's also about enabling fair and equitable access and use and maintaining ecosystem functions to ensure that our marine environment is not compromised for short-term economic gain. We want to increase our own self-sufficiency so that we're not so reliant on foreign exports. We also want to connect local food providers with consumers, supporting our local economy while enhancing food security. And we want to do this within the context and understanding that we're living in a climate changing world. We need to be able to respond and adapt to change and the decisions we make and the actions we take shouldn't contribute to the climate crisis but rather help generate solutions and build resilience. We know this won't be easy but it's absolutely essential and we know we're on the right path.

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Our Blue Economy Priorities:
Boosting self-sufficiency for climate resilience and market stability



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As a small island developing state, Saint Lucia is undeniably and disproportionately impacted by climate change, with more frequent and more severe storms passing over our island, our shorelines being affected by more intense storm surges and sea level rise, our lands being affected by catastrophic flooding and longer periods of drought, and our oceans becoming warming and more acidic, affecting both our coral reefs and seagrass beds. Despite this, there are steps that we are taking to improve our resilience to climate change, including cost-effective and long-lasting nature-based solutions. By restoring, conserving, protecting, and managing our nearshore waters, wetlands, coastlines, and forests we're mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change while also supporting our incredible biodiversity and our economy.

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